illusion of philanthropy and service, the illusion of
works, the illusion of fame, power, success, the
illusion of all achievement. Human social and
political endeavour turns always in a circle and
leads nowhere; man's life and nature remain always.
the same, always imperfect, and neither laws nor
institutions nor education nor philosophy nor
morality nor religious teachings have succeeded in
producing the perfect man, still less a perfect
humanity,—straighten the tail of the dog as you.
will, it has been said, it always resumes its natural
curve of crookedness. Altruism, philanthropy and
service, Christian love or Buddhist compassion have
not made the world a whit happier, they only give
infinitesimal bits of momentary relief here and
there, throw drops on the fire of the world's-
suffering. All aims are in the end transitory and
futile, all achievements unsatisfying or evanescent;
all works are so much labour of effort and success
and failure which consummate nothing definitive:
whatever changes arc made in human life are of the
form only and these forms pursue each other in a
futile circle; for the essence of life, its general
character remains the same for ever. This view"

of things may be exaggerated, but it has an undeni-
able force; it is supported by the experience of
man's centuries and it carries in itself a significance
which at one time or another comes upon the mind
with an overwhelming air of self-evidence. Not
only so, but if it is true that the fundamental laws
and values of terrestrial existence are fixed or that